

BRIEF ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
STATE of the DIFFERENCES

Now Depending and Agitated about

Justification,

And some other POINTS of

RELIGION:

Declaring plainly

Wherein both Sides AGREE, and  
wherein they DIFFER.

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**I** Thought it might much conduce to the Service of Truth and Peace, to State plainly the Points that are in present Dispute among us. For I find many are led to one side and another, and yet understand not aright the Grounds of what they do; but are led by their Affections, animated with Passions, and the respect they bear unto mens Persons. And in many things I observe the Dispute is about Words, when both Sides mean the same Thing. Now so far as I can gather, both from Discourses and Writings on one Side, and the other, I shall here set down wherein both Sides agree, and wherein they differ; if they have declared their minds plainly and sincerely, and will stand to their own Assertions, and not revoke what they have granted. Now the more sober and judicious on both Sides agree in these things.

1. Both Sides agree, That there is an Eternal Election of a determinate number of Persons to Eternal Life.
2. Both Sides agree, That all these shall be certainly Called, Justified and Saved.
3. Both agree, That eventually none others shall be Saved; though they yield, That if any others should Repent and truly Believe, they might be Saved, which is more than can be supposed of the Fallen Angels: And that no Adult Person do perish merely and only because they are not Elected.
4. Both agree, That there is no Justification by the Law of Works, but by the Righteousness of Christ alone; and that

not by the Effects of his Righteousness, but the Righteousness it self.

5. Both agree, That there was an Eternal Compact betwixt the Father and the Son in the Covenant of Redemption about man's Salvation: A Council of Peace betwixt them both, and Antecedent to Christ's Sufferings.

6. Both agree, That something is required to be done by men in order to their Justification; and that they are not merely Passive in it; and none are Justified from Eternity, but only in the Decree of God; nor actually Justified, either by the Death or Resurrection of Christ, till they actually Believe.

7. Both agree, That what God requires of man to do, it is his Grace that enableth him to do it; and the improvement of Nature or common Grace, is not sufficient of it self, much less Meritorious of special Grace.

8. Both agree, That whatever Qualifications God worketh in man, as they do not Merit Justification, neither are they the Righteousness wherein he is Justified before God.

9. Both agree, That though Justifying Faith is always accompanied with other Graces, yet it is Faith alone that doth Justify a Sinner in the sight of God; and that not as a moral qualification; as other Graces are, but as a recipient instrument, receiving Christ and his Righteousness as a free gift tendered to Sinners in the Gospel.

10. Again, both agree, That it is Christ's Obedience, both Active and Passive, that is the meritorious and material cause of Justification, and not any Obedience performed by our selves.

11. Both agree, That the Covenant of Grace is absolute to the Elect, tho conditionally administered in the Preaching of the Gospel; as, *He that believeth, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned.*

12. Both agree, That a man is Completely justified as to his State at his first Believing; and that there is not a second Justifica-



Justification to perfect the first, but only declarative at the Day of Judgment, and by good Works in this World.

13. Both agree, That Justification consisteth not only in the Pardon, or not imputing of Sin, but in the imputing of Christ's Righteousness, whereby a Sinner is reputed and accepted as Righteous in the sight of God, and so differs from Sanctification by infusing Grace.

14. Both Sides agree, That no Works men perform, are acceptable to God; but through Faith, and the Mediation of Jesus Christ.

15. Both agree, That Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of the New Covenant, and the Surety of it both on God's Part and Man's; and therein doth discharge the Office of a Mediator.

16. Both agree, That Jesus Christ was without all Sin, Holy, Harmless, and Undeified; and though he had the Sin of all his People imputed to him, yet God never looked upon him as formally a sinner, as he looks upon wicked men.

17. Further both agree, That more is required to our compleat Salvation, than to our first Justification; as in Marriage, mutual Consent doth enter Persons into the Married state; but many more Duties are required, as conditions of the Marriage Covenant, to be performed afterwards.

18. Both also agree, That the Moral Law is still in force as a rule of life to Believers, though it is abolisht as a Covenant of Works, so as to live by doing it, though done by the special help of God's Grace; and that every Transgression doth in its own nature deserve Death still.

19. Both agree, That some preparatory Work upon the Soul usually goes before Justifying Faith; yet that it is not the like in all; nor any further necessary, than to make the Sinner willing to come to Christ, and to accept of him as offered in the Gospel. And that a Legal Repentance, wrought by the Spirit of Bondage, may be before Justifying Faith.

12. Both

20. Both Sides agree, That tho no Act of Obedience concurs with Faith in our Justification, yet all Justifying Faith contains in it a purpose of Future Obedience, and will certainly bring it forth.

*And it's hoped that both Sides agree to exalt Christ, and the freeness of Grace in man's Salvation, and Holiness and Righteousness among men; and not to expose their present Liberty to Hazard, or Religion to Contempt, by any passionate heats; which are the fruits of the flesh, and not that true Zeal which is the grace of the Spirit.*

## The Differences, wherein they Disagree.

*Which I shall state impartially on both Sides.*

1. **T**HAT the Gospel is a Law of Grace, wherein God as a Sovereign Rector, doth dispense Pardon, Adoption, and all saving Benefits to men, according to the Terms of the Moral Law, as it is mitigated in Christ, and some other Terms of Faith and Repentance required by the Gospel: yet not without respect to the Merits of Christ herein, which they term a subordinate Righteousness; wherein others differ from them, and say, that this is not a Covenant of Grace, but a milder Covenant of Works: wherein a man is justified before God by some Works done by himself, tho done by the help of Grace, and through the Merits of a Mediator are accepted with God. For the Apostle, speaking of Abraham's Justification, Rom. 4. 3. mentions none of his Works, but saith, *Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* And doth make our Justifying Righteousness to consist in a gracious Act of God upon the Sinner, in covering, and not imputing his sin; And not in any Works of his own, either of Nature, or of Grace, Rom. 4. 7, 8.

2. That Christ made a Compact with the Father for us  
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in a distinct Covenant by himself; and was not ever himself a Party in the Covenant; and was not as a Surety bound in the same Bond with men; but as a Surety, giving a Bond of his own to obey the Law, and suffer death for us, and to pay our Debts owing to the Law, or Justice of God. Whereas others say, this is a great mistake; and say, That Christ came under the same Law that man was under, *Gal. 4. 4.* and thereby became obliged to give obedience to the Law; and not only so, but to suffer the penalty of the Law: For those that had broken the Law, being in the same Bond with them, as the Apostle saith, *Gal. 3. 16. That the promises were made to Abraham, and his seed;* which Seed, he saith, is Christ. And the Covenant God made with *David*, was made with him as a Type of Christ, and with his Seed, *Psal. 18. 50.* So that God saith of this seed, *Psal. 89. 31. If his children break my law, I will visit their iniquities with stripes, but my loving-kindness I will not take from him,* that is, Christ; nor break my Covenant with him; as it follows in the next Verse.

And in the Covenant of Redemption it self, made before the foundation of the World, Christ stood not alone in that neither. For then all the Elect were chosen in Christ, *Eph. 1. 3.* And Grace was given them in Christ then, *2 Tim. 1. 9.* before the world began. So that they judge it a great mistake to say, that the Covenant of Redemption is only pleadable by Christ himself: For tho part of that Covenant respect himself only, that he should come into our Nature; and suffer, &c. yet then he undertook for all that God gave him, to bring them to glory.

3. Further, They say, that God looks upon Christ's Obedience as a valuable Consideration only, why he should make a Covenant of Grace with men; and that there was no necessity, that Christ should come into the nature of man, and be made under the Law, and suffer death for our sins, from the nature of the work of our Redemption, but only from the designation and appointment of his Father thereunto.

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And if he had appointed him to perform some Heroick Act of Obedience in any other nature, or of another kind, it might have been as available for our Redemption; and as meritorious for us, as what he did perform.

But others look upon this as a great Error, and say, That the Nature of the work of our Redemption did necessarily require, that Christ should not only merit for us, but should satisfy Justice in the same Nature that sinned, and perform obedience to that Law which man had broken, and bear the Curse of that Law which man was under, to redeem him from it. For it seems necessary that God should secure the Honour of his Law, and Justice of his Government.

4. They will not allow Christ to die, and suffer what he did, as a Publick Person, representing all the Elect, comprehending a Spiritual Seed in himself, as the first Adam did his Natural Seed, so that the Elect may be said to obey, suffer, and satisfy Justice in him. Though they yield, that he did do all this for them. For thus they say, the Elect may be said to merit in him, as Christ merited, and to be Redeemers of the World, as Christ was; and to perform sinless Obedience, as Christ did.

But others judge this a great mistake. For the Apostle in the fifth Chapter to the Romans, doth parallel the two Adams, and saith the first was the Figure of him that was to come. And that all Mankind sinned in him, and are only by him, through the Corruption of Nature derived from him; And as in Adam all died, so in Christ are all made alive.

15. All died, not only by him, but in him. Even Infants that have committed no actual Sin, as an insolvent Debtor may be said to pay the Debt in the Sureties paying it for him; or in his stead. Or if a Friend dies for a Malefactor, the Malefactor may be said to satisfy the Law in him.

And the Objections against this, they answer them thus. That though Christ merited, yet it doth not follow, that those



those that are justified in his Merits, did merit in him. For Christ and they are not the same person naturally, but only legally; as the Client and the Advocate, the Surety and the Debtor. And Christ's Merits did arise from the Dignity of his Person, and his voluntary Undertaking that for us, which he was not antecedently obliged unto; which is not the case of those whom he undertook for.

A Surety that pays another's Debt, may merit from the Debtor; but the Debtor is not at all concern'd in that Merit, but only in the Discharge that he receives thereby. So, if a Believer is justified in the sinless Obedience of Christ, doth it therefore follow, that he must be accounted no Sinner? Is it necessary that a Debtor who pays his Debt in a Surety, be Partaker of all the Endowments and Qualifications of his Surety? Or be judged so to do? It may be yielded that hereby a Believer is justified in a more excellent Righteousness than his own, tho it should be perfect, or than *Adam* had in innocency; but not that we should be accounted in all respects as righteous as Christ himself was; tho it seems necessary that we should be justified in a Righteousness which should answer to the Infinite Justice of God offended by man's Sin. And if any object, Christ fulfill'd not the whole Moral Law, nor performing many Duties required of us, as of an Husband, a Father, &c. *Answer.* He that performs all that the Law requires of him, fulfils the Law. Thus Christ did; and so being under the Ceremonial Law, he performed all requir'd of him by that Law: And being also in the Gospel-Covenant, he did all required of him there. He did not indeed repent, because not required of him, not being a Sinner. And if it be objected again, That if our debt be paid in Christ, and we justified thus in him, What need any thing more to be done by a sinner for his discharge? They Answer to this, That though the Elect Believer is thus virtually and fundamentally discharged and justified in Christ's Obedience; yet God hath appointed Faith to be the mean or way whereby



he should be actually justified: God having so provided, that his Grace should be dispensed in a way that might conduce to his own Glory, as well as man's Salvation. May not a Surety who pays the Money to discharge the Debtor, require something from him to do, whereby he may be made sensible of the kindness he hath shewn him?

5. Again, some say, There are no habits of Grace, but the influences of the Spirit are instead of them; which is a mistake, for this denies all Sanctifying of the faculties, growth in Grace, distinctions of Grace in Believers, &c.

6. Again, some say, That the sufferings Christ underwent, were not the very same that were threatened in the Law, and the damned suffer; but only equivalent to them. For they say, Christ suffered not the loss of God's Image in his Soul, as man did as a Punishment for sin. To this it's answer'd, This is to say, That Christ must become a Sinner that he may save Sinners; when, if so, he could not save them at all. Cannot a Surety pay a debt for the discharge of the Debtor, unless he become as wicked as, it may be; the Debtor is? Christ was never sick, and yet sickness came upon mens bodies as a fruit and punishment of Sin. Christ suffered the *Idem* of that Punishment that was due to man for Sin, so far as might consist with the work he came upon, which was to Redeem and Restore man: And he redeemed man by his Blood, and restores him by his Spirit. Had he suffered the Loss of God's Image, he could not have performed perfect Obedience to the Law; he could not have offered up himself a pure Sacrifice for Sin; he could not have been a pattern of perfect Holiness to his People; *But it behoved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, sin only excepted, Heb. 2. 17.* Was man under the Curse of the Law? So was he. Was man by Sin deprived of the light of God's Countenance? So was he for a time. Was man to suffer the sense of God's wrath? So did he. Was man to die, and to return to the Earth out of which he was taken? So did he. So that he suffered the

the same kind of Punishment that was due to man. It's true his sufferings were not Eternal, because he paid the debt to the full, which the damned in Hell cannot do; and therefore also they despair, which Christ never did, because he knew he should and could deliver himself, which they know they cannot do, and therefore despair. So that in this there is a Difference.

7. Another Difference is about the Moral Law, That it doth not remain as it did, requiring perfect Obedience, and threatening death to every Transgression still. Which is judged an error: For Christ tells us, *Mat. 6. 18. That heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one tittle of the law.* Luk. 16. 17. *And that he came not to destroy the law, but fulfil it.* Only there is provision made in the Blood of Christ for the Pardon of sins against the Law, to Penitent Believers. So that some lower degrees of Obedience are not come in the room of that perfect Obedience which was at first required by the Law.

8. That no Believer ought to have respect to any benefit to himself in any Duties he doth perform. Which is judged a great mistake: For may we not ask that we may have, and seek that we may find, as our Saviour speaks? And look to the recompence of reward, as *Moses* did, for what we either do or suffer for God in this World? And by the same reason we should not have respect to another's good neither.

9. That not only the guilt, but the filth of Sin was laid upon Christ: That is, the obliquity of the very act, and the rebellion that is in it against God was charged upon Christ as guilty of it; which is judged a very false and blasphemous Error. Whereupon they say, Christ became odious to his Father, and abhorred by him when he Offered up himself a Sacrifice, *an offering to God of a sweet smelling savour,* Eph. 5. 2. Christ indeed had our sin imputed to him, and the sense of God's wrath against sin in his Soul; whereby God testified his indignation against sin, but not against his Son: What was laid upon Christ, was done away; but the Act of sin was not done away, though the guilt of it was.

10. That Faith and Repentance are contained in the Moral Law, and were written in man's Nature: Which is judged a mistake. For what was writ in man's heart, did respect only the Moral Law, or Covenant of Works; where there is no mention of the Righteousness of Faith, or any admittance of Repentance for sin.

11. That the Gospel doth not promise life to Penitent sinners, but the Impenitent, because the Penitent have life already. Which is judged an Opinion contrary to the whole Tenor of the Gospel. It offers life to the Impenitent, but doth not promise it.

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12. That the Gospel is nothing else but a Promise. Which is judged a great mistake, unless taken in a very strict sense. For we find many Precepts and Threatnings in it, according to which Christ is teaching his Kingly Office in his Church. And therefore it is certainly a mistake, that for sins against the Gospel men are referred to the Law for Punishment, and shall not be judged by the Gospel at all.

13. That a Civil Magistrate may make a Law outward Grace or Qualifications to examine his State by: Which is judged a great mistake. Doth not the Apostle *Paul* judge of the *Thessalonians* Election by their Faith, *receiving the word with much affliction*, 1 *Thess.* 1. 4. And the Apostle *John*, by love, *by love to the brethren*, 1 *John* 3. 14. As a Man's bad state may be judged of by evil habits and qualifications, so may not his good state be judged of by good habits and qualifications? Especially when made evident in an holy Conversation. Doth not our Saviour himself direct us to judge of the Tree by the Fruits? *Mat.* 7. 20. And the Apostle, of the good state of the *Philippians* by partaking of his Grace? *Phil.* 1. 7.

14. That Justifying Faith is a full persuasion of heart that we are Justified: Which is another great mistake. For the Scripture sets it forth by a coming to Christ, receiving him, and trusting in him that we may be Justified, *Gal.* 2. 16. 3. 24.

15. To give Obedience on the account of any Law-Sanction, is legal Obedience, whether new or old Law: Which is a mistake, and doth exclude all Obedience.

16. That there is a work of Sanctification wrought in the Soul before Justification, in a sinners first Calling; the Apostle saying, *Rom.* 8. 30. *Whom he called, them he justified*; which is judged an error. For *calling*, taken in a strict sense, is either the outward Call of the Gospel, or the first answer of the Soul of a sinner to this Call, in a willingness to leave his former *sin*, and to come to Christ as King, Priest, and Prophet, that he may be Justified and Sanctified by union with him. Some other Differences I might mention, but these are the Principal.

Thus for the sake of those that have not time to read long Discourses, and cannot comprehend nice distinctions and controversies in Religion, I have publish'd this plain Sheet: Which I wish may be a Winding-sheet to our late Differences, and an Instrument of Truth and Peace; and of maintaining that Brotherly Union which hath been long desired, and much endeavoured, and at last happily effected, and in the presence of God and Angels Attested and Solemnized. *Amen.*

